

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 184210 TOSEC 190135

71

ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 SS-15 SSO-00 ISO-00 CCO-00 PRS-01 PA-01

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NEA - MR. ATHERTON

S/S-O:AWOTTO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 184210 TOSEC 190135

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR, PFOR, LE, US

SUBJECT: BEIRUT EVACUATION

1. THE FOLLOWING WILL BE INCORPORATED IN REMARKS BEING MADE BY WHITE HOUSE PRESS OFFICER WHEN ANNOUNCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE BEIRUT EVACUATION AT 7 P.M. EDT TODAY, JULY 24. DEPARTMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN WILL ALSO MAKE FOLLOWING REMARKS, AND AMBASSADOR SEELYE IS AUTHORIZED TO DO THE SAME IN BEIRUT.

2. TEXT IS AS FOLLOWS: QUOTE: WE HAVE CONTINUED TO HAVE DAILY EXCHANGES WITH VARIOUS PARTIES, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIANS, TO FACILITATE THE DEPARTURE OF AMERICANS AND OTHER FOREIGNERS IN BEIRUT. WE ARE PLEASED THAT ALL

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 184210 TOSEC 190135

PARTIES HAVE EXTENDED THEIR FULL COOPERATION TO FACILITATE

THIS DEPARTURE. END QUOTE.

3. WILL SEND TRANSCRIPT OF WHITE HOUSE STATEMENTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

4. FOLLOWING IS PRESS GUIDANCE FOR USE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS AFTER THE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:

QUOTE: Q. WHY DID YOU ABANDON THE ROAD CONVOY FOR A SEA DEPARTURE?

A. ON THE BASIS OF OUR EXCHANGES WITH THE PARTIES INVOLVED IN MAINTAINING SECURITY FOR AN EVACUATION, IT WAS DECIDED THAT DEPARTURE BY SEA IS THE SAFEST WAY TO DO IT.

Q. DO THE PARTIES WITH WHOM YOU HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH INCLUDE THE PLO?

A. YES.

Q. BUT PRIVATE PERSONS AND CONVOYS GO TO DAMASCUS EVERY DAY BY ROAD SAFELY. WHY COULDN'T YOU?

A. THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR A LARGE NUMBER ARE NECESSARILY MORE DIFFICULT TO ASSURE THAN FOR A SINGLE CAR OR SMALL CONVOY. THE PARTIES RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY ADVISED US THAT THE ROAD WOULD NOT BE TOTALLY SECURE.

Q. WILL AMBASSADOR SEELYE BE COMING OUT?

A. THAT HAS NOT BEEN DECIDED.

Q. HOW MANY WILL BE COMING OUT?

A. WE ASSUME THAT A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER WILL LEAVE ON THE 27TH, THOUGH WE WILL NOT KNOW HOW MANY UNTIL REGISTRATION IS COMPLETE.

Q. WILL YOU STILL REDUCE THE EMBASSY STAFF? TO WHAT LEVEL?

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 184210 TOSEC 190135

A. YES, THE EMBASSY WILL BE REDUCED TO A MINIMAL LEVEL OF ABOUT 15 AMERICANS.

Q. THINGS ARE LOOKING BETTER IN LEBANON--THE EMPLACEMENT OF THE ARAB LEAGUE FORCE AND SOME HOPEFUL INDICATIONS FROM THE SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN MEETING--WHY ARE WE PRESSING FOR EVACUATION NOW?

A. BECAUSE OF THE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT LIVING CONDITIONS, WE DECIDED TO REDUCE THE SIZE OF OUR EMBASSY TO WHAT IS ACTUALLY NEEDED TO FUNCTION IN CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES. WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO ASSIST PRIVATE AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO ALSO WANT TO LEAVE, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE. WE CONTEMPLATE NO SUCH FURTHER ORGANIZED DEPARTURES AND ARE THEREFORE URGING ALL PRIVATE AMERICANS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DEPART UNDER U.S. GOVERNMENT AUSPICES.

Q. DOES THIS MEAN YOU EXPECT THE SITUATION TO TAKE A TURN FOR THE WORSE?

A. NOT NECESSARILY, BUT WE JUDGE THAT IT IS PRUDENT IN LIGHT OF THE UNPREDICTABILITY AND DIFFICULTIES OF LIVING IN WEST BEIRUT TO EVACUATE AS MANY AMERICANS AS POSSIBLE NOW.

Q. YOU EVACUATED IN JUNE AND NOW AGAIN IN JULY; CAN WE EXPECT ANOTHER IN AUGUST?

A. NO. THIS IS THE LAST SUCH ORGANIZED DEPARTURE. ROBINSON

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